Christian Courier

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Coalition supports civil service strike despite negative effects on businesses

Alan Doerksen

STRATHROY, Ont. — As the largest civil service strike in Ontario's history continues, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) is speaking out in favor of the workers and supporting their right to strike. But abattoir owners such as Ralph Bos, of Strathroy, Ont., are being denied government services because of the strike and are critical of the striking workers.

ISARC is a coalition of religious communities that addresses issues such as poverty and homelessness. Member organizations include the Jewish and Buddhist communities, the United and Anglican churches of Canada and Citizens for Public Justice. In a March press release, ISARC affirmed its members' beliefs in the following points:

- workers have a right to organize, participate in and be represented by unions;
- collective bargaining is integral to and a critical means of establishing just relationships between workers and employees;
- unions can play a vital role in building a society based on justice and equity;
- unions and public sector workers are not the cause of the provincial or federal financial deficit.

ISARC has called on Ontarians to respect the picket lines of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), "oppose strongly any use of replacement workers," and "to call on the provincial government not to cut, but to maintain the public services that help provide universal access and quality of life for the people of Ontario."

Discomfort or risk?

Rev. David Pfrimmer, chair of ISARC, affirms the coalition's support of the OPSEU strikers. "The workers are under tremendous attack and people are saying, 'Enough is enough.'" The workers have a right to strike and negotiate, he adds.

Pfrimmer acknowledges that the strike is having some negative effects. "A lot of people are inconvenienced or put at risk unduly." When asked if the government should allow alternate meat inspectors, so that abattoirs can keep running, Pfrimmer replied, "We're not in favor of replacement workers. The introduction of replacement workers just exacerbates the situation."

ALAN DOERKSEN

OPSEU workers on strike outside the Ministry of Transportation offices in St. Catharines, Ont.

"ISARC is very definitely concerned with the validity of negotiated contracts in Ontario," adds Michael Maher, ISARC's briefings co-ordinator. "We need to respect what comes from negotiation."

Ralph Bos Meats Ltd. of Strathroy, Ont., is one of almost 300 abattoirs that have been virtually shut down by the month-old strike. Bos calls the strike "terrible."

By law, abattoirs need to have provincial government meat inspectors on hand to be sure meat is healthy. Because these inspectors are on strike, Bos Meats cannot legally slaughter any animals. As a result, the company has had to lay off six employees.

One possible loophole was for the local municipal government to appoint a meat inspector, but that fell through when

See **STRIKING** *page 2...*

Lilies

silent in beauty
like pure white
bridal dresses
illumining the darkness
of death
eloquent their message
like trumpets
loudly proclaiming
the resurrection
of Jesus
with victory over
sin
death
and hell.

Raymond J. Schraa
Edmonton

RAYMOND SCHRAA

In this Issue

Easter 1996

"The Lord is risen; he is risen indeed!" ..... pp. 4, 10, 11

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News

Striking inspectors shut down Ontario meat plants

... continued from page 1

the Middlesex-London health unit voted 3-2 against appointing one, reports Bos.

The company also hoped the Ontario government would legislate the job of meat inspecting as an essential service, which would force inspectors to return to their jobs. But on March 14, the government lost its bid to do this.

ALAN DOERKSEN

A striking OPSEU employee in St. Catharines, Ont.

David Johnson, the provincial cabinet minister in charge of the public service, says the government sympathizes with meat packers, but there's little that can be done, reports the *London Free Press*. Johnson agrees that meat inspectors should be declared essential. According to the *Free Press*, more than 3,000 meat plant workers have been laid off or forced to have their hours cut as a result of the OPSEU strike.

The only way Bos's company can stay in business in the short-term is to send truckloads of cattle to a federally inspected abattoir in Kitchener for processing, and to store the meat in freezers. "You work from day to day," comments Bos.

Not collective-bargaining issues

Bos supports the Ontario government's cutbacks to services: "That should have happened years ago." But he is somewhat critical of the planned cut to income taxes. "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer," he comments.

Ray Pennings, publicity director for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), is critical of the OPSEU strike. "The bottom line is we approach negotiating very differently from how OPSEU does," he comments. Pennings sympathizes with the stress OPSEU workers are facing because 13,000 of their jobs may be cut. But, he adds, most of the issues at stake are not collective-bargaining issues. "The essential problems are the things the government has enacted through legislation."

COURTESY RAY PENNINGS

Ray Pennings

Pennings is critical of both sides involved in the strike. Premier Harris "has been standing up to labor to show the province is open for business," he comments. But Pennings says 13,000 government employees should not have to lose their jobs for the sake of "good business." The government is "certainly using this as a game in a larger agenda," he says.

On the other hand, the union has shown "a total disrespect of the government's legitimate concerns about balancing their books."

Pennings says the government should not allow replacement workers for jobs such as meat inspection. Government workers have the right to strike, and "you can't undercut the agreement by using replacement workers."

Middle East peace process can't be stopped, panelist says

Conflict shifting from Palestinians versus Israeli Jews to those who want peace versus those who don't

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — The peace process in the Middle East can be delayed but it cannot be stopped, a Palestinian living in Canada told a February 28 forum in Winnipeg on the prospect for peace in that region.

"It is a momentum that cannot be changed — it is irreversible," said Nabil Oudeh, director of Winnipeg's Centre for Conflict Resolution International.

Oudeh was one of three panelists participating in the educational forum sponsored by the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, The Canadian Arab Association of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba.

Other panelists included Jim Carr, an editorial writer for the Winnipeg Free Press who returned recently from a trip to the Middle East, and Harold Dueck, who spent several years in the Middle East with MCC. The forum was held at the University of Winnipeg.

The panelists agreed that people on both sides of the century-old conflict are willing to work together to find workable solutions, but that extremists on both sides are trying to stop the peace process.

They described the conflict as shifting from Palestinians versus Israeli Jews to those who want peace and those who don't.

Interfaith coalition criticizes Ontario government's user fees, tax cuts

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) is critical of the Ontario government's plans for user fees and cuts to income tax rates. In a recent letter to Ontario premier Mike Harris, ISARC called for a moratorium on income tax cuts and a restoration of services to the poor that have been cut recently.

In its letter to Harris, ISARC refers to user fees as "another regressive tax that simply delivers more pain to those who can least afford additional cost at this time." ISARC has asked the government to allow public debate about user fees, and has also asked the government to share any policy studies and projections it has which form the basis for the idea that tax rebates and user fees can alleviate poverty and increase employment in Ontario.

So far, ISARC has gotten no response to its letter from Harris, says Rev. David Pfrimmer, chair of ISARC. Usually it takes Harris's office from six weeks to four months to reply to ISARC's letters, he adds.

Pfrimmer says ISARC is not completely against user fees. There are "probably some appropriate places where user fees are okay" such as for license plates, he says. But he adds, "user fees for health care are inappropriate." If Ontarians get the 30 percent tax cut promised by the Harris government but have to pay more user fees for services, "how much further ahead are we?" asks Pfrimmer. He refers to the Ontario government's recent cutbacks to services affecting the poor as "immoral in our opinion."

Michael Maher, ISARC's briefings co-ordinator, adds that user fees are "part of the downloading process from federal government to provincial and municipal." In the future, the Ontario government may introduce user fees for services such as garbage collection and libraries, he says.

User fees target those who often can't afford government services, says Maher. By introducing them, the Ontario government "wants to withdraw from its role of protecting poor people."

Maher also criticizes the Ontario government's plan to cut income tax. "Only two per cent of that is going to poor people," he states. "If we're going to return money, it ought to be to the poor." Money given back to the wealthy will probably go into RRSPs rather than to create new jobs, says Maher.

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News

Two Canadians figure prominently in modern China

Eric Hagt

Any Occidental person in China is branded by the derogatory moniker "lao wai" or "old foreigner." Canadians are included in this lot, though, by and large, they seem to have a propitious rapport with the Chinese.

For starters, Canada does not have the stigma of being one of the imperialistic powers that repressed China in recent history. From the 17th century to the 20th, Britain, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Japan and the U.S. have all had a hand in exploiting the Middle Kingdom.

Yet China's favorable disposition toward Canadians comes no so much from our exemption from being an imperialistic bad guy as it does from helping China in a cause dearest to its 'revolutionary' heart.

If you accost any proletariat strolling the boulevard in virtually any town throughout China they will invariably know two Canadians. In fact, it is safe to say these two Canadians claim the greatest fame among foreigners in 20th century China.

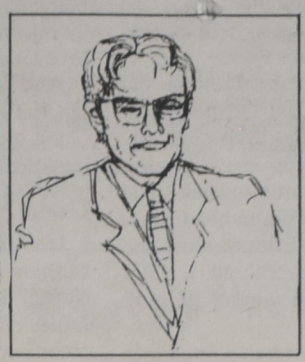
The first is Norman Bethune, a surgeon who hailed from Gravenhurst, Ont. He spent 18 months in China (1938-1939) during the war of resistance against Japan. A member of the Communist Party of Canada and a radical anti-fascist, he fought alongside Chinese peasants to oust the Japanese. Bethune died on the battlefield in the remote mountaineous regions of Hebei Province, but not before substantially building up the PLA's (People's Liberation Army) mobile medical operations.

The "Great Helmsman" himself, Mao Ze Dong, wrote a passionate hagiography dedicated to Dr. Bethune. This piece was to become mandatory curriculum throughout China's primary schools — thus Bethune's posthumous distinction throughout the land. Mao's edict was for every child to know how Bethune laid down his life in service of the people for the mission of China's "Glorious Revolution." This Canadian's martyrdom for the People's Republic of China (PCR) has found not only an important place in the history books, but in the hearts of the Chinese people.

A different kind of 'hero'

The second person is still living in China. He doesn't have the same ideological conviction as Bethune did, but has attained comparable fame, nonetheless. Toronto was once his home, but now with a Chinese wife and a child he seems to be settled nicely in Beijing. His name is Mark Boswell, but he is known to the Chinese as "Da Shan," meaning "Big Mountain."

Da Shan came to China in the early '80s with the first wave of foreigners who arrived following the Cultural Revolution. His success in studying Mandarin at China's most prestigious university was noticed by a leading Chinese celebrity who took Mark into his personal training.



ERIC HAUT DRAWING

Mark Boswell, better known to the Chinese as "Da Shan."

Da Shan now boasts his own Chinese TV sit com, and more showbiz offers than he can handle. His popularity is the hallmark of another revolution in China — one of the Chinese throwing off the shackles of a xenophobic, stifling epoch and embracing capitalism and modern culture.

Norman Bethune died a hero fighting to liberate the Chinese from the bonds of its aggressors. Da Shan is now also famous, but unlike his compatriot he's making a serious bourgeois income from it. One sacrificed his life for China's political ideology, while the other is a symbol of China's liberation from it. Both are dearly loved by the masses.

All caucasians will remain suspect in the eyes of the Chinese for some time to come. However, these two figures in China's 20th century history have exempted Canadians from the "lao wai" roster.

Eric Hagt is studying at Beijing University of Traditional Chinese medicine. He is a native of St. Catharines, Ont.

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No Issue on April 12, 1996

In keeping with our no-issue schedule (see box on this page), we will not publish an issue on April 12, 1996.
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If only the news could have a Good Friday slant

It's easier to see signs of the death of Jesus in today's news than signs of his resurrection.

In the last few weeks we have been confronted with the horrible slaughter of 16 children in Dunblane, Scotland, and the senseless killing in Florida of a high school student from Scarborough, Ont.

China has been rattling its sabres in the Straits of Formosa to intimidate the people of Taiwan, and the United States hypocritically decided to paint Cuba into an even smaller economic corner while continuing to seek trade with the monstrous regime of communist China.

All these recent news items carried more the flavor of Good Friday than Easter Sunday. After all, Good Friday is about the victory of evil, isn't it?

The three-hour darkness seems to stretch into 1996.

But there are at least two things wrong with the way I have colored the picture. Good Friday is not just about three hours of darkness and the insults soldiers and religious leaders heaped on Jesus. Nor is it just about the horrific pain of being nailed on a cross and hanging there to die. Good Friday is first of all about the incredible love God's Son has for the human race.

And secondly, what the news media report is not the same as what happens. There is often Good News present in the midst of disaster and injustice.

Good News reporting

It's true, all too often, that the media report bad news in a way that makes it look like "Bad News." Had the major papers of today been in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' trial and crucifixion, we would have ended up with a day called Bad Friday. Why? Because the bad news of hatred and destruction would have been reported without hope and without perspective.

But the Good News reporting of the Gospels give us the perspective we need in order to absorb the bad news and to understand the futility of evil. That's why that terrible day in which Christ was crucified has been called Good Friday (Thank God it's Good Friday!). It's a Good News day for all those who believe that their pascal lamb has been slaughtered and the Angel of Death will pass over them. That's why early Christians called Good Friday the First Passover Day, and Easter, the Second Passover Day.

To be fair to the press in our situation, there were some Good News signs of reporting of the Dunblane disaster. The outpouring of love and consideration on the part of the public was heart-warming. And it seems that in times of emergency, the church and the Christian faith get to play a significant part, even in the news. The fact that the media did not stay around to film the funerals showed admirable discretion. That's a Good News way of reporting.

Signs of redemption

But when it comes to political and economic reporting, one often feels deflated after reading or hearing the news. Where are the signs of redemption? Where is the perspective to help Canadians make sense of these things?

No, reading the news often has little to do with Good Friday. Good Friday is terribly sad, of course, especially when that cry rips through the ages: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But it is the cry of obedience, trust and love.

I wish the news media would pick up on that. Let's hear more about obedience, trust and love as we view the bad news with Good Friday eyes. **BW**

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— provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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Do you believe the resurrection of the body?

There are some people who call themselves Christians and who entertain notions of reincarnation. They think they can blend Christianity and Eastern religion into some kind of wholesome mix. But Eastern religions, including their modern offspring New Age, and Christianity mix no better than oil and water. The reason lies embedded in Easter.

One huge difference between Christianity and Eastern religions is that Christianity is a religion of the "crucial moment," whereas Buddhism, for example, is a religion of process. Christianity centres around the resurrection of Christ, that one event that took place 20 centuries ago; Buddhism has no such single-event focus in a long process of self-improvement.

Christianity holds that all people die and will rise again, once and for eternity. Buddhism believes the soul lives on after the death of the body and is reborn in another body in a lengthy cycle of rebirths, until a person finally reaches a state of perfection. Christianity sees death as the result of a human couple's fall into sin many centuries ago; Buddhism sees death as a natural process that was always there.

Seeing Christianity as the religion of the crucial moment also means that people can, any day of their lives, make destiny-changing decisions. This is what makes Christianity such a hope-filled religion. The word "today" has great significance within the context of Christianity. *Today* we can take up our cross. *Today* we can hear God's voice and not harden our hearts. *Today* we can experience the newness of Easter.

And the reason for that hope of *today* can be traced to that one very specific day two centuries ago when Christ rose from the grave. It was the first day of the week, the day we call Sunday, when he broke free from the shackles of death and emerged from the tomb as the icebreaker for all those who have fallen asleep.

Christians practise the religion of the empty tomb; Buddhists practise the religion of the never-empty womb. Behind the empty tomb is a personal God who acts in the course of time. Behind the never-empty womb is a universal force that cannot speak, nor intervene.

Just in case any Christian who reads this editorial is toying with New Age ideas of re-incarnation, he or she should know that the one religion excludes the other. You cannot believe in Christ *and* reincarnation. **BW**

Letters/Poetry

The Lord knows how to take care of his immigrant children

Betty Voskamp is not of Dutch background (CC March 15), but she must have come very close when she married a Dutchman with the name "Voskamp." Congratulations, Betty.

I imagine that her husband arrived with his parents from the Netherlands. He probably does not know that the mature immigrant brought with him a set of customs and modes of action and thinking that influence all of his life. Even if these first-generation immigrants tried, they could not disassociate themselves from these. These customs and this thinking m made them what they are.

Rev. Tenis van Kooten, former pastor of First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church wonders in his book *Living in a New Country* how long it takes to change over from the old mode of living and thinking to that of one's adopted country. There are many that contend that a complete transition takes three generations.

Make allowances

Betty is in the process of getting acquainted with a second-generation Dutchmen. From what we gather, her husband hasn't been much help to her. Like so many, is he ashamed of being from Dutch background?

I would suggest that Betty Voskamp read Rev. van Kooten's book. It will be an eye opener. If she can't find the book, she can borrow my copy.

If she knew what lived in the hearts of first-generation immigrants, she would make allowances for singing "Ere zij God" at Christmas time. Is singing that once a year asking too much? Betty Voskamp is upset because Dutch services are advertised. She wonders why people, even after 40 years in Canada, still go to a Dutch-language service. I hope she does not become intolerant but tries to understand the elderly immigrants who love to sing the old Dutch songs of Johannes de Heer.

As an old Frisian, it takes effort for me to become a bit sentimental, but when I see those who have reached the evening of life sing "Er ruist langs de wolken" or "Beveel gerust Uw wegen" with tears in their eyes, I know that the good Lord knows exactly how to take care of their spiritual needs.

Please be careful with your criticism.

Klaas Terpstra
Hamilton, Ont.

The church has its own sphere of responsibility

In your Feb. 23 issue, we were informed by Henry Wesselius's letter to the editor ("The clergy has a right to speak") that the church has, since its inception, been involved in socio-economic issues for the welfare of the people. He mentioned that the first five books in the Old Testament have enough examples of governance of social and economic issues.

It is rather simplistic to compare the ancient theocratic kingdom with our modern world governments. Furthermore, to back up his claim, he mentioned Rev. Woodsworth. Woodsworth was very active in the CCF, which is now the New Democratic Party. He was a "theological libertarian," and advanced his cause by combining Marxist doctrine and biblical theology. Woodsworth's labor church proclaimed politics and economics through selected religious themes, meanwhile estranging people from biblical truth.

Clergies should not be opinion makers. That goes beyond their calling and competence. There are real limits to the degree of involvement of the church. The church must remain church, and its credibility will remain only if it concerns itself with the plight of the poor, but not by trying to explain the phenomenon of poverty. The church has its own sphere of biblical justice, and it cannot give specific guidelines on how to deal with justice, only that justice must be done.

George Lieuwen
Langley, B.C.

Easter

Most glorious Lord of Lyfe! that on this day,
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;
and, having harrowd hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win;
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest dye,
Being with Thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live for ever in felicity!
And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same againe;
And for Thy sake, that all lyke dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne!
So let us love, dear Love, lyke as we ought,
— Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

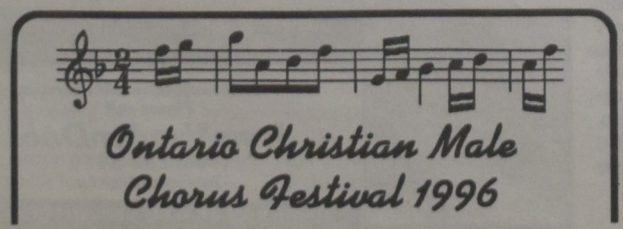
Edmund Spenser

Christ's triumph over death and sin, says the great English poet Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), grew out of Love. And, in turn, love must be the essense of our lives — a message as new in the near-21st century as in the 16th or the 1st. (If the sonnet seems difficult, three or four readings will heighten its impact and clarify its meaning.)

Watch the bottom line!

An advertisement in your paper tells us that on April 27 the Ontario Christian Male Chorus Festival will be held at Redeemer College. It is my sincere wish that they sing from notes on *five* lines instead of *four* as indicated in the ad!

Herman de Jong
Jordan Station, Ont.



Learn to appreciate your own and other ethnic heritages

Sorry, Betty, but your comments on speaking "Dutch in church" don't fly (CC letter, March 15). We were *not* asked to sing "Glory to God in the Highest" in Dutch. The words are there, so, of course, some do sing "Ere zij God." The Lord understands and loves it either way.

How about the songs in Spanish? Malita loves to sing in *her* mother tongue. Why don't you take up the challenge of learning to speak the Dutch language? Janet from England does (also a member of Bethel, Waterdown).

As far as advertising the once a month Dutch church service in the Ancaster, Ont., Chr. Ref. Church for the benefit of the elderly — fantastic! Most people go back to their mother tongue when older.

And not everyone has been here in Canada for 40 years, as you stated. My reason for writing; I do not want the readers of *Christian Courier* to get the wrong picture.

Annie Voortman
Burlington, Ont.

Education

Byker names Plantinga Calvin's first 'Dean of the Chapel'

Will try to make faith 'big and bright and explicit' on campus

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., 50, has been named the first-ever "Dean of the Chapel" for Calvin College. The appointment will be effective July 1 pending final approval.

"It's exciting," Plantinga said. "I have to sort through some things — There's a job description, but I still have to learn the actual rhythm of the position. What really attracts me to the job is trying to help in making the Christian faith big and bright and explicit on campus. Christian colleges are like gardens; they need to be tended. It's a big project to integrate Christian faith into the life of a campus. You need to keep at it. I'm looking forward to joining that project."

Plantinga currently serves as professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. He is a noted author, theologian and speaker and is well-known as an advocate for Christian education. His book, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, has just been named the 1996 Book of the Year by *Christianity Today*.

Plantinga's new appointment will put him in the rare position of working for both Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. In addition to having faculty status at Calvin College and teaching undergraduate courses, Plantinga also will retain faculty status at Calvin Theological Seminary and teach a core course at the seminary annually.

Plantinga will report directly to first-year Calvin president Dr. Gaylen J. Byker. Byker called Plantinga's appointment "compelling."

He said, "Since taking office in September, I have become increasingly persuaded that the leadership that could be provided by a Dean of the Chapel is needed at Calvin College. As we address the opportunities and challenges that confront us, we must never lose sight of our calling as an institution of Christian higher learning in the Reformed tradition. To have someone in our midst whose task is 'to offer prophetic challenge and priestly support to the Calvin community in keeping its deepest commitments, educational activities and life practices headed in the same direction of holy obedience to God's Word' will help to keep our community connected and centred on our mission and commitments. After prayerful consideration, both Neal and I are convinced that the remarkable fit of his interests and the college's needs signalled a calling for him to fill this position."

The responsibilities of the Dean of the Chapel are:

* to encourage and equip the faculty as individuals and departments to model and hence to foster thoughtful, passionate Christian commitment;

* to oversee a regular schedule of worship opportunities that contribute to both the personal and corporate edification of the Calvin community;

* to advise the president and senior leadership of the college about the congruence between the community's culture and the mission;

to work collaboratively with the college Chaplain on common concerns for fostering the lively piety needed at Calvin College;

* to teach one to two courses per year in the contextual disciplines with the approval of the president; and to serve the college as an ambassador to constituents through preaching and teaching engagements.

'Show the faith's force and beauty'

"It's a very challenging task," said Plantinga, "and an exciting one. I'm grateful for the opportunity to join others in trying to lift up the Christian faith on campus — to show its force and beauty for all of human life, including academic life. I could not pass up the chance to be part of that."

Plantinga graduated from Calvin in 1967 and then studied English at Yale until he endured what he calls "a personal and spiritual crisis" which led to a rededication to Christ and then a commitment to go to seminary and enter the ministry.

Plantinga pastored the CRC in Webster, New York, from 1971 to 1975. He then began PhD studies at Princeton Seminary. In 1979 he began teaching at Calvin Seminary.

Plantinga is a member of Woodlawn CRC where he also is an associate pastor. His wife, Kathleen, is an elementary school teacher at Kelloggsville Christian School. The couple has two sons: Nathan, a second-year law student at Michigan, and Adam, a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Houston, Texas.

Out to pasture

EDUCATION

Alyce Oosterhuis

Downsizing; streamlining; realignment: The buzz words of the '90s have an impact no less on Christian schools than on public schools, business and government structures. However, since the context of compassion, responsibility and stewardship is very different in a Christian community from the public realm of individual rights and freedoms, I wonder whether these buzz words are to be uniquely interpreted by Christians. What do I mean?

Many of the Canadian Christian schools were established in the late '50s and early '60s. In those days, teachers were scarce. School boards would hire any willing person to fill their teaching posts: high school graduates; six-week "crash-course" graduates; general college degree dropouts: B.Ed. graduates. Many of these unprepared teachers worked diligently to become excellent teachers; some of them became only mediocre teachers. The same was true for those who had been educated appropriately for their teaching careers. And all of them paid for their acceptance of the call to teach by earning substandard salaries.

What to do with mediocre teachers?

Thirty years later, the call to streamline, downsize and realign means that various institutions are looking at their staffing models and wondering how to save the "big bucks" their senior staff members are costing them. In the universities and hospitals, senior personnel are enticed into taking early retirement benefits or "golden handshakes." However, in the Christian communities, schools do not have the financial flexibilities and capabilities to offer enticing early pensions or substantial buy-out payments. So what do we do with our senior teachers, especially the mediocre ones who could be replaced by an excellent and cheaper teacher version?

When the times get tough, the tough get going, as the saying goes, and I sense an increasing toughness in some of our Christian school communities' decreasing tolerance for mistakes. Our collective memory of previous sacrifice and commitment has no relevance for the immediacy of today's demands. In a world where academic "excellence" increasingly reigns supreme, the ordinary, plodding, sometimes inspired, relatively predictable, often boring, 56-year-old teacher is strongly encouraged to leave voluntarily or is hounded by criticism into an early retirement without additional benefits. Where is there a place in our Christian communities for mediocre wisdom? What ought to be our response when it is tempered by compassion, responsibility and stewardship?

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College, Edmonton.

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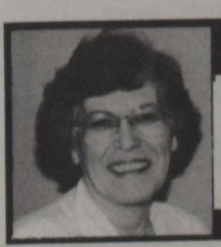

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Books

Bible study with a social conscience

Through the Eyes of a Woman — Bible Studies on the Experience of Women.

Revised edition.
Edited by Wendy S. Robins. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications-World YWCA Publications, 1995, 145 pp., softcover. $14.95 US. Reviewed by Sophie Vandenberg, Norval, Ont.

Through the Eyes of a Woman is an unconventional approach to Bible study. It is designed for women who like to be challenged to discover how the Bible relates to contemporary experience and who have an affinity for social justice issues.

Editor Wendy Robins has gathered in this short book a rich collage of writings. These range from Scripture to the thoughts of theologians, to personal accounts written by marginalized peoples about their own experiences.

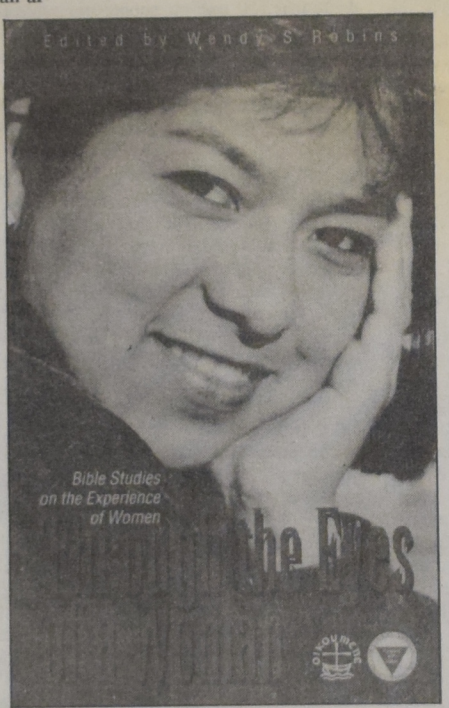
The approach offered is not driven by an effort to accumulate biblical knowledge where learners progress by finding the answer to a number of closed-ended questions.

Serving the text

Instead it suggests the use of several stages of study. The first stage consists of introducing the text through silent reading, oral reading, dramatization or otherwise. The next stage is "interacting" with the text through questions, discussion, retelling the story or other dynamic means. In this stage the reader may, for instance, be invited to "imaginatively slip into the skin of the characters of the story" through role play. The last stage is one of responding to the text by applying it, by prayer, decisions for action, or other appropriate response to the given passage.

However, the words of contributor Walter Wink warn the reader that the above exercises must always serve the purpose of the text. The intention of such a Bible study is not to "titillate the group with warm fuzzy experiences." Instead it aims to find what Wink calls, "the subtle interaction between the text and our own life..., where, in short, we encounter the living God addressing us at the point of our and the world's need." The intent is that the meaning of the Bible for life today will be understood afresh.

This book can be used either by individuals or in group settings. Its flexible structure allows it to be freely adapted to a variety of situations. It includes practical information on how study groups can function effectively. It offers guidance in deciding everything from group size, frequency of meetings, the most conducive environment for meeting and length of study, to the type of leadership and defining the facilitator's role.



In such a Bible study each participant is considered a valuable contributor. As Walter Wink writes, "We are all equals before the text."

The strength and also potential difficulty of this Bible study is its ambitious scope. It does not encourage easy answers to complex questions. It requires a high degree of commitment on the part of participants and especially the facilitator of each session to prepare thoroughly for the meeting. A group engaged in this type of study would need to commit to doing the necessary "homework" and background work to make their time together effective.

Developing a biblical social conscience

Divided into five sections the book deals with the issues of refugees and migrants, women and poverty, women and justice, women and health, women and the image of God, peace and an equitable world.

In the section dealing with refugees and migrants, the study draws from women's own experiences. They are invited to share how being displaced or relocated, perhaps through job transfers, has affected members within the study group. From there the attention moves toward "social analysis." This stage requires research into who the displaced people are within one's own community, examining reasons for, and implications of, their displacement.

Included are ideas for Bible study relating to the exiled peoples. It considers the pain of Israel's exile in Babylon expressed in Psalm 137. It points to Jesus as an exile in Egypt. It asks who the ones in "Egypt" today are, where "Herod" is in modern day life, and why "innocents" continue to be slaughtered. The group is invited to commit to action on the plight of displaced peoples. The section concludes with additional resources that provide more information, personal accounts by dispossessed peoples and poetry.

Through the Eyes of a Woman is a helpful introduction to "transformational" Bible Study. The scope and variety of suggested questions, activities and responses make it an especially useful resource for any Christian engaged in social justice efforts, particularly as they relate to women's issues.

Evangelicals urge TV execs to adopt code

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The U.S. National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and several U.S. senators are calling on the TV industry to go beyond the proposed "ratings and V-chip" system to set higher programming standards. NAE urged the industry to adopt a self-imposed code of common decency which would uplift what is best in human nature and eliminate needless portrayal of those characteristics which debase it.

"Major television networks must be held accountable for the moral chaos that reigns supreme in their programming," said the Rev. Richard Cizik, a policy analyst in the NAE's Office for Governmental Affairs. Cizik noted that 20 years ago, TV networks agreed to provide a "family hour," but that such self-restraint is now missing from network fare.

"*Washington Post* TV critic Tom Shales likened the lineup to 'inviting a foul-mouthed drunk into your home.' We raise our voice in protest and ask the industry to act on its own — while it still can — to adopt a self-imposed code of common decency," Cizik said.

"The attitude on the part of writers, producers and network programming officials is that violence, sex, abusive and vulgar language are so common as to be treated on television as normal or excusable behavior. This attitude is wholly and completely irresponsible and should change," he added.

Canadian books needed for exhibition in China

(Canadian Scene) — Kati Rekai, co-chairperson of the Writers' Union of Canada reports that Lanzhou University in the People's Republic of China will host an exhibition of Canadian books beginning May 20.

Previous Canadian books exhibitions have been hosted for Writers' Union by Canadian embassies and consulates in Athens, Belfast, Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest, Galatz, Kiev, New York, Riga and Prague. The union is seeking 600 books, in English and French, to be donated by Canadian publishers and writers. The books remain in China. Publishers and writers of books by Canadian authors wishing to contribute copies of their works should send them to: Writers' Union of Canada, 24 Ryerson Avenue, Toronto, ON M5P 2P3, before April 15, marked "Chinese Exhibition"; or call Kati Rekai at (416) 922-5841.

Michael W. Smith leads Dove Awards nominations

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — Capitalizing on the success of his current album *I'll Lead You Home*, Michael W. Smith leads the list of nominees for the 27th Annual Dove Awards, which will be held at the Grand Ole Opry House on April 25. Smith, who will host the awards, received seven nominations.

"I'm thrilled for all of the nominees who are being recognized this year," said Bruce Koblish, president of the Gospel Music Association. "It's great to see Michael's multiple nominations, especially since he's been in the Christian music industry for 13 years. It indicates that we were on target when we selected him as the show's host."

Other multiple nominees include Point of Grace, 4HIM, CeCe Winans, and Steve Taylor; each had six nominations. Steven Curtis Chapman, Larnelle Harris and Jars of Clay had five nominations each. *My Utmost for His Highest*, an album of songs inspired by the writings of Oswald Chambers, earned six nominations.

But the biggest winner of the Dove Awards could be dc Talk's Toby McKeehan, who has the potential to win eight awards — four as a member of dcTalk, two for songwriting credits, and two producer nominations as part of the Gotee Brothers team.

Church

Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright wins Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Dr. William R. "Bill" Bright, president and founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International, is the winner of the 1996 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. The announcement was made March 6 at a press conference held at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York.

Bright, 74, a former specialty-foods purveyor, sold his business to begin Campus Crusade for Christ with his wife, Vonette, at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1951. Since that time, the organization has grown into an international Christian ministry with the ultimate goal of helping to evangelize every person on earth. By its own estimate, Campus Crusade has already reached more than two billion people with the gospel message of God's love and forgiveness.

The Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion is the world's largest annual financial award, this year increased in value to 700,000 pounds sterling — more than $1 million. Begun in 1972 by renowned global investor Sir John Templeton, the prize is awarded each year to a living person who has shown extraordinary originality in advancing humankind's understanding of God and/or spirituality.

Past Templeton Prize winners include such visible figures as Mother Teresa (1973), Dr. Billy Graham (1982), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1983), and Charles Colson (1993). Many, however, have earned the prize for pursuits far removed from the public eye. Last year, for example, mathematical physicist Paul Davies won the Templeton Prize for his wide-ranging inquiries into the workings of the universe that search out the connections between science and religion.

'Four spiritual laws'

Bright began his work with students, sharing New Testament teachings one-on-one. He gathered a group of like-minded students who then shared this message with others. Today, Campus Crusade serves on more than 650 university campuses in North America and approximately 470 campuses overseas. Similarly, recognizing the influence athletes have in society, Bright founded Athletes in Action in 1966. During the past three decades, athletes have been recruited to share the message of Christ in much the same way advertisers seek these role models to do commercial endorsements.

Bright's "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet — a four-point outline written by Bright in 1956 on how to establish a personal relationship with Jesus — has been printed in nearly 200 languages. Although religious tracts have been published for centuries, Bright's booklet became what is likely the most widely-disseminated religious booklet in history, with approximately 1.5 billion distributed.

Among the most ambitious of Campus Crusade for Christ's efforts has been a feature-length film documenting the life of Christ. The film includes a cast of 5,000 and was filmed at 202 locations in Israel. Since its debut in 1979, it has been translated into a record 355 languages and viewed by an estimated 750 million people in 217 countries.

In a statement prepared for the news conference, Bright said he was "deeply humbled and greatly honored" to receive the Templeton Prize, and commended Templeton for founding a prize "which emphasizes the most important aspect of life — the spiritual dimension — upon which all other considerations of life find fulfillment."

Bright said he would use the money from the Templeton Prize to "educate leaders of the church worldwide to the spiritual benefits of fasting and prayer." He added, "I believe that fasting with biblical prayer is the most enriching and energizing of all the Christian disciplines and can accomplish more for the glory of God and ensure his blessing upon the peoples of the earth, more than anything else we can do."

Evangelicals chart a course for the 21st century

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — In an effort to provide direction for evangelicalism as it moves into the next century, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) adopted an "Evangelical Manifesto" during its 54th annual convention, held March 3-5 in Minneapolis.

The manifesto calls all evangelicals to prayer, repentance and reform, unity and co-operation, evangelism and cultural impact. It adds that NAE "will offer its networking services to these co-operative efforts so that the world which needs Christ will be confronted with his love and truth."

To pursue the goals of the manifesto, NAE president Dr. Don Argue appointed a task force to recommend new courses of action designed both to advance the biblical mandate for unity within the body of Christ and to improve NAE's ability to assist its own membership in such growth. The Christian Reformed Church is a member of NAE.

The manifesto calls on the church to "lead our nation on biblically directed racial and ethnic reconciliation." Outgoing NAE president David Rambo told delegates to the convention that the failure of white evangelicals to participate in civil rights struggles is a "major obstacle to the credibility of the evangelical cause." He added, "It's hard to be an American without being prejudiced, but if we're truly Christians, we can't be racist at the same time."

The manifesto also addresses the divisions that often form within the evangelical community. "We confess that although we value unity and united evangelical action, we too often do more to build our own ministries than to co-operate at making it difficult for someone in our own neighborhood to be lost for eternity."

Five principles

The manifesto proposes five principles for increased unity among evangelicals:

* Focus on the absolutes of the Christian faith.
* Promote the ministry of Christ and his Word above our own ministry or method.
* Pray to raise the level of the Holy Spirit's activity in your area.
* Appreciate one another's respected interpretations of Scripture.
* Practice supportive speech and actions toward one another.

NAE delegates also officially adopted a "statement of conscience" on worldwide religious persecution. The statement reflects NAE's concern for religious freedom around the world. The statement encourages the appointment of a special adviser for religious liberty to the U.S. president, and the rescinding of foreign aid to countries that do not act to stop religious persecution.

Convention delegates also adopted an official policy condemning any collaboration between missionaries or employees with intelligence agencies. The action was prompted by recent testimony of CIA Director John Deutch before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee about an apparent loophole in CIA rules that allows the U.S. spy agency to solicit clergy and missionaries for covert work overseas. Christian organizations have expressed concern that such a practice could place all Christian workers in politically sensitive areas at risk.

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Church

The female apostle

Al Wolters CHAPTER & VERSE

"Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Rom.16:7, KJV).

"Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was" (Rom.16:7, NIV).

Romans 16, the last chapter of the Apostle Paul's most famous letter, consists mainly of personal greetings. Since we do not know most of the people whose names are mentioned, the chapter does not make very interesting reading. At best we can look on the long list of names as an authentic touch illustrating the very human relationships in which the great apostle stood with other early Christians.

There is something significant, however, about the second name in verse 7. The King James Version spells it "Junia," and the New International Version spells it "Junias." If the former is right, the person in question was a woman; if the latter is right, the person was a man. Since we are talking about someone who is described as being "outstanding among the apostles," this difference is of considerable interest.

In the original Greek the name is actually *Iounian*, the accusative (direct object) form of either the feminine name *Iounia*, or of *Iounias*, which could be the short form of the masculine name "Justinianus."

The KJV chose the first possibility and the NIV the second. This is not surprising, since, in our time, until recently, most biblical scholars thought that it was likelier that *Iounian* represented a masculine name. My dictionary of New Testament Greek, published in 1979, has the note under the entry dealing with this name: "The possibility, from a purely lexical point of view, that this is a woman's name *Iounia*... is probably ruled out by the context."

Modern scholarship biased

It turns out, however, that it is far likelier that the name here refers to a woman. Recent investigations have shown that although the name *Iounias* could theoretically (on the analogy of other similar names) be a contraction of the masculine name "Justinianus," there is actually no record of it ever occurring. On the other hand, there are dozens of examples from antiquity of the name *Iounia* or "Junia" as a woman's name.

It turns out that the modern scholarly consensus on this point was based not on the linguistic facts but on the assumption that it was unlikely that a woman could have been prominent among the apostles.

It has now also come to light that a number of Greek Church Fathers, including the great exegete John Chrysostom in the fifth century was also of the opinion that the person in question was a woman. Since he was himself a speaker of Greek, he recognized the name *Iounia* as a common woman's name, and concluded that Andronicus and Junia were a husband-and-wife team. It is perhaps due to his authority that the King James translators also correctly identified the name as feminine.

We leave aside two further questions: whether the phrase "among the apostles" simply means "in the opinion of the apostles" (a possibility which I consider unlikely), or whether "apostles" is here used in a broader sense than is usual in the New Testament (a possibility which I consider likely).

It is enough to point out that the suspicion of gender bias in biblical scholarship has in this case led to genuine advance in our understanding of the Bible.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and classical languages at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He likes to think that he follows where the philological evidence leads.

Heavy rain doesn't keep crowds from Franklin Graham Crusade

BRISBANE, Australia (EP) — Evangelist Franklin Graham spoke to nearly 115,000 people during Australia's "Festival '96." Graham spoke at three-day festivals in Sydney and Brisbane and at one-night festivals in Cairns and Townsville. Despite heavy rains, it was the largest evangelistic outreach of Franklin Graham's seven-year crusade career.

Franklin Graham's mother, Ruth Graham, faxed a letter to her son urging him not to be discouraged about the rain. Ruth Graham, who has been hospitalized and diagnosed with spinal meningitis, wrote: "being flat on my back gives me plenty of time to pray for you."

Franklin Graham's father, Billy Graham, was originally slated to speak at Festival '96 events in Australia and New Zealand, but medical problems forced him to cancel his plans. Local church and civic leaders in Sydney and Brisbane decided to invite Franklin Graham and continue with plans which were already in place.

Fearless preacher of the gospel

While Franklin was quick to admit he "cannot be Billy Graham," he preaches "the same message" and gladly accepted the invitations to Sydney and Brisbane. Franklin was then invited to conduct one-night rallies in the northeastern cities of Cairns and Townsville after church leaders there learned he would be in the country.

Rain fell on Sydney's historic Parramatta Park all three days of the Sydney event, which was held in a grass amphitheatre with no fixed seating. Still, some 25,000 people of all ages turned out, with umbrellas, and plastic trash bags to sit on.

Ross Clifford, president of the New South Wales Council of Churches, declared, "There is no doubt God is raising up a new group of Christian leaders as we head into the third millennium. One of these leaders is Franklin Graham. He is a fearless preacher of the gospel."

From Sydney, Graham flew 1,600 miles north along the northeastern coast of Queensland, visiting Cairns and Townsville. As he has often done over the past seven years, Franklin agreed to preach crusade services in smaller cities where his father has never visited and which are rarely visited by international evangelists.

Franklin then travelled to Brisbane for three final Festival '96 services. More than 700 churches participated in the festival, marking the first time in Brisbane's history that all major denominations have agreed to work together on an evangelistic event of this nature. All around Brisbane, billboards, yard signs, and bus advertisements carried messages about Festival '96. One message read, "Could a Yank tell you something you haven't already heard? God knows."

The Most Rev. Peter Hollingworth, the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, said he placed great hope in the evangelistic rallies in that city, noting that "the churches have lost a generation of young people and will lose the present one unless they find new ways to present the faith."

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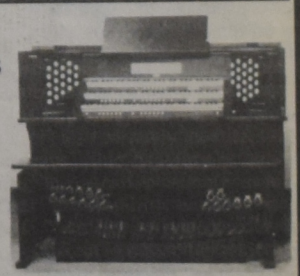

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Feature

The curtain fell but went up again

A Good Friday meditation on Luke 23:44-49

Joe Veltman

Do you ever feel that things are conspiring against you? That your life is out of control? That the days are evil?

If ever things seemed out of control, surely it was on the dark Friday when Christ was crucified. If ever things seemed to have gotten out of hand, surely it was on that black day. If ever Satan, the prince of darkness, ruled the world, surely that was his day. If you wanted to pick a day when, above all, "the times were out of joint," you would want to pick the day when Jesus died.

On that dark day, it seemed that everything was dislocated. As when a hip joint separates and the person can no longer run, so things were separated, disjointed, and dislocated on such a scale that everything came to a halt. Things were coming apart before the eyes of the world.

Divide and conquer. It is the most ancient of strategies for conquest. Even in the animal world we see this strategy. Wolves separate a lamb from the flock, and once it is alone, they slaughter it. And the devil, like a wolf on the prowl, or like a roaring lion, was isolating the Lamb of God.

The religious leaders plotted his death. They turned the crowds against him. The disciples deserted him. Judas joined in the plot and betrayed him. What God had joined together, evil was conspiring to separate. Now on the cross, the dark plot was hatching its final misery.

Chaos threatens

Yes, the day was out of joint. The Crucifixion was a tremendous attack on the way things ought to be. If even the most loving person is so abandoned, then nothing seems to hold anymore. The creation itself seems to protest. If its Creator, the eternal Word of God, can be so wrongly placed under judgment, then nothing will stay in place. If God's Word will not hold for the protection of the righteous one, then it will not hold for his creation.

And so, the darkness leaves its appointed place. Chaos threatens. In the beginning, darkness hovered over the face of the deep. "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness." (Gen.1:3,4). The light and darkness each had their separate place.

But not on that day. It was about the sixth hour; noon. And the darkness left its place and invaded the day. It was not an eclipse. It was the time of the Passover, which was always during a full moon when no eclipse is possible. The very times were literally out of joint. The darkness which God had separated from the midday and joined to the dawn and dusk was dislocated and moved into midday. The very fabric of reality was being stretched to the breaking point.

And in the temple, the fabric of the temple curtain was torn in two.

What in heaven and on earth was going on here? The truth is, much of it is a mystery we don't fully understand.

How could the perfect Son of God endure hell, separation from God? We can't fathom it. That's why it is an article of faith. It is as if God drew down for three hours the curtain of darkness, to shade this, too, from prying eyes. It is shrouded in mystery.

It is like going to a play. In the first act we have seen the dark plot unfold. The story comes to a turning point. The plot comes to a climax of evil too brutal to be portrayed on the stage. At that point, the curtain comes down. When the curtain comes up again, the stage has been rearranged. The main characters are still the main characters, but something odd has happened between acts, something to change their relationship. And you don't know entirely what it is. You guess from the clues given. But it is a mystery.

We see through a glass darkly. Certain things remain hidden in the mind of the author of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit.

But we *do* see that the world looks different now that the curtain of darkness has been lifted again. And we see things in a different light. The centurion is now praising God and witnessing to the goodness of Jesus!

A new order

The darkness will not win. It held sway for three hours, and then it went back to its place. Once again God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God separated the light from the darkness." After this darkness, there was a New Creation in Christ Jesus. The curtain of darkness fell, but it went up again. And when it came back up, there was a new order.

Behind the scenes, the stage of human history had been rearranged, and now there was a new covenant, a new relationship between God and his people. A covenant of grace has been established.

It all went according to plan. Even the dark plot was part of God's plan of salvation. It was all part of God's plan to separate a people for himself. God was in Christ establishing the new order of faith in Christ as the way of salvation. When the darkness lifted, the crowd separated. There were those who left beating their breasts. They had come to watch, but did not know Jesus. They did not know him as their master. And they left. But those who knew him, including the faithful women, remained.

The Resurrection, Cookham (detail), 1923-26, by Stanley Spencer

The final act

And so the drama of history is unfolding. And one last time the curtain will come down. And when it comes up again, the final order will be established. There will be a final judgment. And there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And Jesus will separate the sheep and the goats, according to whether they knew him or not. And those who do not know him as their Savior and Lord will be banished to utter darkness. Darkness will be banished from the new Jerusalem where there will be no night. And Jesus will be the light of the new world. And in that new paradise will be all those who seek the light of his mercy and forgiveness. In it will be those who see the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

What do you see today? Let us join the centurion in his vision of faith and his praise to God. Let us praise the mystery of God's grace and the mastery of his ways. May the Lord grant us the faith to know him. For if we know him, nothing will be able to separate us from his love in Christ Jesus. For all goes according to his master plan, for the good of those whom he has called out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Joe Veltman is a pastor in the Reformed Church of Maitland, Ont.

Feature

Who is the 'Ruler of the Forest'?

An Easter fable

George Prins

Often I go for a jog in the woods with my dog, Corvette. I notice the vines that creep up some of the bigger trees and I see the damage they will cause to the trees. Such trees will eventually die and perhaps be blown down by a strong wind. During the past two years a kind of allegory seemed to come to me about this. During May last year I wrote it down. I hope you enjoy it and latch some of the symbolism. Whom do you think each character represents?

In a field near the forest lay a vineyard where many grape vines were grown by a farmer. He took very good care of his vineyard and each year harvested many grapes.

In the vineyard there also grew a vine that did not bear any fruit. This vine wanted to do one thing only. It wanted to grow as many leaves as possible. In fact, the vine told a nearby tree and the other vines he would be Ruler of the Vineyard! The other vines were horrified. Would this, their brother, one day spread his leaves all around them?

One day as the farmer was checking his vineyard, he stumbled across the vine that bore no fruit. The vine was beautiful and leafy, but held no grapes.

"Silly vine," said the farmer, "I'm going to cut you down. You are only a wild vine."

So with his pruning shears and saw, the farmer cut down the vine. The other vines breathed a sigh of relief. Now they could grow grapes without any problem.

As Wild Vine lay beneath the hot scorching sun, he said to himself, "I can't die here on the ground. That's no good. I am still young! If only I could find some cool, dark place to hide."

So he yelled in a loud voice to the big tree nearby, "Hey, Mr. Poplar, would you wave those large mighty branches and create a wind? Then maybe the wind will lift me up and carry me to the forest over there beyond the hill."

Mr. Poplar stooped to hear the poor whimpering voice far below. "You want me to create some wind, you wild little vine? Why, that's no problem," he said laughing, "This has been a boring day just standing here. I want some action! You make me feel important once again. I like to be popular!"

With his huge branches and leaves, Mr. Poplar started moving this way and that. First he swayed to the left, then to the right. Back and forth he swayed until he created a huge wind. The wind soon picked up Wild Vine and carried him over the hill and into the forest. He landed next to a big tall oak tree growing beside a babbling brook.

MARIAN VAN TIL

It was cool and moist in the forest, much better than lying under that hot sun in the vineyard. *This will be a nice place to live,* thought Wild Vine. *The earth is spongy and will be great to grow in.* So Wild Vine decided to set his roots down and stay a while. Every day he grew a little stronger. Soon he started to climb up the tall oak tree beside him.

The oak tree, however, did not like Wild Vine crawling up his huge trunk. "Get off me, you silly wild thing! Leave me alone! I don't like you!"

"No, I won't get off, Mr. Oak Tree! You know what I want to be? I want to be tall and strong. Even taller then you, Mr. Oak Tree. I want to be Ruler of the Forest!"

This disturbed Mr. Oak Tree greatly. Every day he could feel Wild Vine crawling further up his huge trunk. Wild Vine curved all around Mr. Oak Tree and snaked higher and higher. Mr. Oak Tree could feel Wild Vine stealing more and more sunshine from his leaves, which started to wither, turn yellow and fall to the ground. He was taller than the other trees around him, but when he looked down and around him the other trees looked so green. His leaves were dying because they could get no sunshine. "Why did silly Wild Vine have to come and bother me?" he cried.

Wild Vine, on the other hand, was becoming very happy. It was great to grow so tall and see so far! Now he knew that one day he would indeed be Ruler of the Forest. Soon, he reached the top of Mr. Oak, and decided to spread all of his vines and leaves around the top of the tree.

Mr. Oak Tree cried when he saw all his leaves fall to the floor of the forest and he feared for his life. He began to notice a numbness in his great arms and branches. He knew that his large branches were dying. Never again would he be able to grow those beautiful green leaves like other trees around him or produce acorns, nor be able to carry the nests of the eagles.

CC FILES

Wild Vine was in his glory. "I'm Ruler of the Forest," he shouted to the other trees all around him. "Watch out for me!"

Every morning when the sun came up he yelled, "I'm Ruler of the Forest. Watch out for me!" And all day the creatures and trees heard him sing his little ditty, and shook with fear. "What will big Wild Vine do next?" they asked, trembling, "Will he hurt us too?"

One day Eagle was soaring high above the clouds. Far down below her she could hear a voice singing, or rather, yelling. "What could this be?" she wondered. With her mighty eight-foot wings, Eagle swooped down closer to earth. Then she heard "I'm Ruler of the Forest! Watch out for me!"

How can this be! thought Eagle. *I'm Ruler of the Forest, and there can be no other. I am the one that can see, oh so far! I can climb taller than any tree. I have never seen any living thing touch the clouds way up high as I do.*

She swooped down closer to the forest. Now she could see Wild Vine covering the canopy of the big oak tree. She also saw that Mr. Oak was almost dead. This bothered Eagle very much. Never again would she be able to hide her big nest in the tall branches of the oak tree.

Suddenly, Eagle had a plan. She knew it would not be good for Mr. Oak Tree, but she had to get rid of huge Wild Vine. He was strangling the tree which carried her nest! With her mighty wings Eagle would create a huge wind and blow Mr. Oak Tree down. Then Wild Vine would fall to the ground and would never again be Ruler of the Forest. That's what she would do!

So Eagle climbed higher into the sky and started to flap her wings faster and faster. Up and down those huge wings, beat until finally a mighty wind fell on Mr. Oak Tree. Slowly, he started to lean. Big Wild Vine could feel Mr. Oak Tree shake and tremble.

This frightened Wild Vine. He looked down at the ground far below him. He could feel himself leaning more and more as Mr. Oak Tree trembled and shook. The wind became increasingly strong, like a hurricane. Eagle beat her wings more furiously. "That Wild Vine will no longer be Ruler of the Forest," she muttered to herself.

Mr. Oak Tree leaned more and more. The wind was becoming too much for him. He could no longer carry the weight of his own huge branches plus the large, ugly wild vine. Mr. Oak had to fall.

With one last gasp and a last cry, he came crashing to the ground, flinging all of his acorns far and wide. His great branches and limbs broke and crunched, but he also crushed ugly Wild Vine beneath him.

Eagle felt sorry for Mr. Oak Tree. Mr. Oak had seen so many little eagles grow and learn to fly. "Why did Wild Vine have to kill such a beautiful majestic tree like Mr. Oak?" mourned Eagle. "I hope Wild Vine will never strangle and kill another tree in the forest again. Maybe Mr. Oak Tree's acorns will grow, and one day carry the nests of my descendants. As for me, I will always be Ruler of the forest!"

George Prins grows roses in Ridgeville, Ont.

Features

Golgotha

The skull
The mountain
to which all other peaks lead
The place where
the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus
the One who bought my freedom
with His blood.

In this place
of executions
where the God-Man died so I wouldn't have to
I lay the burden I have carried
until now.

He will raise up the valleys
and make the mountains low
Isaiah tells me

If I let Him

Too often —
like John Christian
and other pilgrims before him —
I deposit my burden at the foot of the cross
only to pick it up again.
Why?

Freedom is a hard master
to one accustomed to bondage

The Hebrew slaves
on their way to the Promised Land
yearned for the security of Egypt
where they ate to their stomachs'
content

✞✞✞

See the tears of creation
etched in stone
The rocks themselves
writhing in torment
at the sight
of their Maker
nailed to a cross
on the skull-shaped mountain
outside Jerusalem

The worst possible way
to kill a person
humiliating
and agonizingly slow
had to be the price
of my liberation from sin
Yours too
if you let him

Did he pay that price for nothing?

✞✞✞

Michèle Gyselinck

New church symbolizes Good Friday and Easter

CC FILES

CC staff

BRAMPTON, Ont. — On the hills overlooking the Credit River, a new church, built in a contemporary version of the late Byzantine style, tells through its shape and location that Christ died and arose.

If you fly over St. Elias Church, you will notice that the building forms a cross. When you're on the ground on a sunny day, you will see that the church is laid out on an east-west axis, symbolizing the risen Jesus Christ, the true light of the world, who will come again as lightning from the east.

Designed by F.J Reinders and Associates Canada Limited, a Brampton-based architectural and engineering firm, the St. Elias Church was designed and built in close consultation with the parish of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Ukrainian Catholicism is steeped in tradition and is rich in mystical expressions.

The exterior of St. Elias shows five domes, or *cupolas*, which represent Christ and the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each dome holds a cross, the symbol of Christ's victory and unconditional love.

Inside, the church is divided into three sections: the narthex, nave and sanctuary. The architectural focus is the bishop's chair, behind which is the foundation stone containing relics of saints John Chrystostom, Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian. The stone is an allegory of Christ, the cornerstone upon which the church is founded.

Pre Sentence Report

Name
Jesus of Nazareth
alias: Messiah, Son of Man

Criminal history
Vandalism - Matthew 21:12-16
Vagrancy - Matthew 8:20
False Pretence - John 10:23-39
Creating a Disturbance - Luke 23:2-6

Family & support system
Associates with criminals, prostitutes and other outcasts. Little contact with family, who consider him distant and strange.

Education & training
Worked as a carpenter. No employment for past three years. No regular income and no fixed address.

Psychological profile
Highly intelligent, adopting teacher's role with others. Claims to be the Way, the Truth and the Life, indicating features of egocentrism. Evasive during interview, speaking in parables. Externalizes blame. High range propensity for future criminal conduct.

Assessment
Accepts responsibility for criminal history but does not exhibit remorse. Suffers from antisocial personality disorder. Rejects authority.
Should be crucified.

Ron Dube
Kingston, Ont.

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Advice

Why do CC and I disagree?

Dear P & M:

Despite the fact that we think Christian Courier *is a very good paper, we don't always agree with everything in it. I am especially bothered by the fact that certain political parties or public persons whom we appreciate are cut down. A while ago an article about the Christian Heritage Party immediately got a negative letter to the editor. The same thing happened with the Reform Party. And right now, it is Mr. Harris who really gets it just because he wants to motivate able welfare people to look for work.*

I say, good for him! We all know something has to be done. My heart goes out to those who cannot help their situation, but I have no sympathy for the many persons who have a welfare mentality that is passed from generation to generation. And then to think that every second, thousands of dollars are added to our debt!

Dear Bothered By The Press:

A letter to the editor does not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the paper. Please don't assume that just because someone writes to criticize a party or person that *Christian Courier* shares that person's opinion.

We hope that you share our belief that there is a legitimate place for critique. Your own letter is a form of criticism. That's good. That's how we grapple with the truth, come to well-balanced positions and ideas, and keep each other in line.

Political parties and public officials need to be analysed and critiqued constantly. The media do us a great service by informing their readers or viewers and keeping the politicians on their toes.

Perhaps you expected CC to support everything that comes from a politically conservative point of view. We don't think that's a fair expectation of a Reformed Christian weekly

Instead, we expect this paper to examine everything from a Reformed perspective and to offer insights and critique that are articulate, biblically informed and reformational.

Take Mr. Harris, for example. We happen to really appreciate his courageous attack on Ontario's debt. His apparently fearless tenacity is quite remarkable. But we wish he would go after the chief executive officers and the huge corporations with their huge salaries and profit margins rather than the single mothers who are now tempted to water down their infants' formulas, or the handicapped workshops that were almost shut down.

We welcome your critique and we hope you don't become unnecessarily agitated when someone else critiques something you support. Keep in mind Prov. 18:17, which says: "The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him."

Column attains 'number of fullness'

Dear Readers:

Today our column celebrates its 7th anniversary, a biblically significant number; the number of fullness; the number that signifies a comprehensive effort (seven days of creation), a comprehensive assault (seven times around Jericho), and a comprehensive address (seven letters to the seven churches). Looking back, we thank God for the energy he provided us in our effort to assault or address all the issues and ideas, questions and concerns that have come our way all these years.

We want to thank our advisory panel. Originally we were helped by Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Willy Suk-Kleer and Tom Zeyl. We were also joined by Bill Fledderus and Irene Bom during their one-year stints with CC as young journalists.

Today our outside advisors are Herman De Jong, Bill Lidkea and Alan Vandermaas. Thank you, all of you, for the invigorating conversations and the invaluable input that helped us hone in on a well-balanced reply.

One born every minute

We especially want to thank Bert Witvoet and Marian Van Til, the two people who have been there for us throughout the whole seven years. Marian edits our columns and she and Bert are part of our advisory panel. They approach issues in radically different ways. They do not hesitate to take opposite sides on the panel. But they always respect each other as they valiantly defend their positions and help all of us see the various sides of an issue. Thank you, both.

Bert, we still shake our heads about the way you got us into doing this. You pulled some of us together all those years ago to do some brainstorming about an advice column. Like suckers at a Barnum & Bailey Circus we walked right into your noose as we joined the meeting and said, "Good idea! Use a question and answer approach. And have you thought of using a couple rather than an individual?" At which point you said, ""Actually, yes, we had — the two of you." Oh!

Finally we want to publicly forgive you, Bert, for setting us up and reeling us in. This experience has stretched our thinking and writing abilities. The advisory panel and the column has helped us grow spiritually, emotionally and intellectually in ways we could not have foreseen. That's why, these many years since you taught Peter English at Toronto District Christian High, he still sees you as his teacher even though he no longer calls you "Sir."

Write to: Peter and Marja Slofstra, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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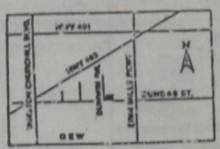

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Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

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a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Share your family news in 1996 with the rest of us. Place an ad in C.C.

Anniversaries

1956 April 6 1996

With joy and thanksgiving for the 40 years God has blessed you with, our prayer is that He will continue to bless your lives together.

Congratulations Mom and Dad (Grampa and Gramma).

JOE and WILMA BENNIK
(nee WEENING)

Much love from:
Sy & Grace Bennik
Ron, Brad, Yvonne, Danielle, Jessica, Kara
Pete & Audrey deKlerk
Jeff, Nathan, Robert, Natalie, Chris
Cor & Joanne Bouwsema
Jennifer, Stephanie, Melissa
James & Carolyn Vanderhoek
Amanda, Wesley, Sean, Ian

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His lover endures forever" (Ps.118:29).

Twijzel Owen Sound
1951 April 12 1996

"May the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion" (Ps.134:3).

With great joy and thanksgiving to God for His care and faithfulness, we are happy to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

KLAAS and SUZANNE DYKSTRA
(nee HAMSTRA)

May God continue to be with you in the future. With love from your children and grandchildren.

(Ralph †)
(Martin †) & Ann Dykstra — Red Deer, Alta.
Kurtis, Karie-Ann, Kristen
John & Mary Dykstra — Shallow Lake, Ont.
Tracy, Matthew, Trevor, Sabrina
Willard & Margaret Dykstra — Selkirk, Man.
Nathaniel, Theodore, David, Deanna
Shirley & Fred Heuser — Hanover, Ont.
Devin, Brandon, Keera
Betty & Leo VanderWekken — Stratton, Ont.
Danielle, Joseph, Davida, Jaden, Dara
Karen & Wayne Haagsma — Salford, Ont.
Karissa, Jenna, Rachel

Address: R.R. #3, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N5

Anniversaries

Serooskerke Niagara-on-the-Lake
1951 1996

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we are able to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and Opa and Oma

JIM and CLAZINA MEYERS
(nee TON)

We, as a family, pray for many more years of love and happiness to come.

With love from their children and grandchildren:
Elly & Bram Hoff
Shannon, Aron, Marcel, Benjamin, Kristin, Julie, Peter
Fred & Sandy Meyers
Jim, Blake, Jordan
Helen & John Ysselstein
Shep, John, Marc, Daniel, David
Sharon & Jeff Buisman
Janine, Katelyn, Sarah

Address: 1444 Irvine Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0

1956 April 13 1996

With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

HENK and DINI EVERS
(nee ZYLSTRA)

May the Lord continue to keep you and bless you, in the years to come.

Congratulations and much love from your children and grandchildren.

Jerry & Geraldine Evers — Wellandport
Marietta & Bert Mulder — Dunnville
Joanna & Clarence VanderHout — St. Ann's
Sonya & John Wierenga — Fenwick
Lorraine & Pete Wierenga — Fenwick
Bill Evers & Tammy — Vulcan, Alta.
Henry & Cindy Evers — Welland

and 20 grandchildren.

Friends and relatives are invited to celebrate this joyous occasion with us at an open house to be held in the Wellandport Chr. School on Saturday, April 13, 1996, from 8-10 p.m.

Best wishes only!

Home address: R.R. #3, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

Anniversaries

1946 April 22 1996

With great joy and thankfulness, the family of

KLAAS and CORY VANDERWOUDE

of Brampton, Ont., formerly of Barrie, Ont., would like to wish them a happy 50th wedding anniversary.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121).

Joan & Joe Koole
and family
Jill & Bill Lise
and family
Margaret Milbury
and family
Diana & Martin Vanderwoude
Renee & Tom Bilodeau
and family
Cindy & Bill Crompton
and family

We welcome all friends to drop by an open house on Saturday, April 27, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at Holland Chr. Homes, 2nd floor Faith Manor. Please best wishes only.

Home address: Holland Chr. Homes, C-708, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Obituaries

1897 1996
Zuidwolde, Dr. Brampton, Ont.

Psalm 43: 3,4

Fully trusting in God's faithfulness

MEINE OLDEJANS

died peacefully in his 99th year on March 26, 1996, at Holland Chr. Homes.

In Canada (since 1951), he spent his most productive years in the Bowmanville area as gardener on an estate and hobby farmer at home. He patiently endured minimal eyesight and hearing for the last 20 years of his life.

He was predeceased by his wife: Roelofje Oldejans-Hofsink (1973)

his sons:
John Oldejans (1968)
George Oldejans (1981)

and his grandchild:
Ingrid Oldejans (1979)

He is loved and respected by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:

Alice Oldejans-Oudyk (former wife of John Oldejans) & John Oudyk
Rose Oldejans-Feddema (former wife of George Oldejans) & Peter Feddema
Marvin & fiancee Sandra, Eunice, Kim & Len, Jason
Henk & Dini Oldejans
Merlin, Grace & Bernie
Henny & George Witvoet
Evan, Rhonda & Arnold (Joshua, Heather), Michael & Diana (Cara, Jarod), Brian & Carla (Marina, Bethany), Ian & fiancee Debbie
Alice & Bert Witvoet
Ed & fiancee Christine, Maynard, Marguerite, John & Doreen, Stephen

Correspondence address: Henny Witvoet, 468 Fernhill Blvd., Oshawa, ON L1J 5J7

Obituaries

On Sunday, Feb. 25, 1996, God called home

PIETER JOHANNES BERGHUIS

at the age of 72.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his wife Elisabeth.

His family:
John & Mary Berghuis
Harold & Jennifer Berghuis
Danny Berghuis
Derrick & Elizabeth Berghuis
and seven grandchildren.

The funeral service was held on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 1996, at St. David's Presbyterian Church, St. John's, Newfoundland.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

On Wednesday, March 13, 1996, our father, opa and great-opa,

HENDRIK KUIPERS

peacefully went home to be with his Lord and Savior at the age of 93 years.

Beloved husband of the late Jantiena Kuipers (nee Sliekers).

Beloved father of:
John & Elsie Kuipers — Trenton, Ont.
Tim & Dorothy Kuipers — Trenton, Ont.
Henry & Diane Kuipers — Carrying Place, Ont.
Bill & Marion Kuipers — Kingston, Ont.
Alice & Gerald Suurdt — Frankford, Ont.

Opa of 24 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. Predeceased in 1995 by grandson Edward Kuipers.

Brother of Johannes Kuipers, West Australia, and Mrs. Jantje Keep-Kuipers, Oostzaan, the Neth.

Brother-in-law of Mrs. Jantje Sliekers-Lahuis, Coevorden, the Neth., and Mrs. Grace Sliekers-Dolfing, Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15).

Funeral service was held on Saturday, March 16, 1996, in Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church, Trenton, Ont., with Rev. R.W. Popma officiating.

Correspondence address: John Kuipers, R.R. #1, Trenton, ON K8V 5P4

For Rent

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College rents furnished 1-, 2-, and 4-bedroom apartments **May to August.** Enjoy our pastoral setting while visiting the **Hamilton/Niagara/Toronto** region. For excellent daily, weekly and monthly rates, and for reservations, phone **(905) 648-2131, ext. 260.**

For Rent

For rent: Three-bedroom cottage in scenic **Holten, the Netherlands.** Phone Andy Borger: **(905) 623-6049.**

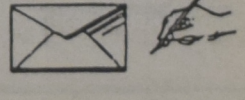
Apartment for rent in Fenwick, Ont. One bedroom. Fridge and stove. $400. Available May 1, 1996. **Call (905) 892-8215**

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.

Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2



Classifieds

Obituaries

Borger Harriston
the Neth. Ont.
June 29, 1913 - March 25, 1996

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps.46:10).

God took to Himself His child

JANTINA OLDENGARM-JOLDERSMA

Predeceased by her beloved husband, Geert Oldengarm.
Sadly missed by her children:
Herman & Jane Oldengarm
Martin & Jenny Oldengarm
Grace & Dirk van der Male
Harry & Christa Oldengarm
16 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on March 28, 1996, at 2 p.m., in the First Ref. Church, Harriston, Ont., Pastor John Heeg officiated.

Correspondence address: Herman and Jane Oldengarm, 608 Main St. E., Listowel, ON N4W 2C7

Zwaagwesteinde Townsend
Friesland Ont.
May 8, 1906 - March 23, 1996

The immigrant journey of our mother, Beppe, and great-grandmother ended when the Lord called home his child

TJITSKE RAUWERDA
(nee BROUWER)

on Saturday, March 23, 1996, in her 90th year. She was the loving wife of the late Ebe Rauwerda who died in 1978.

Much loved mother of:
Emmy & Mike Voorberg — Newmarket
Ken & Ditta Rauwerda — Jarvis
Wim & Hennie Rauwerda — Acton
Cor & Susan Rauwerda — Jordan Station
Pete & Trudy Rauwerda — Kettleby
Gertie & Ralph Hielema — Orangeville
Dick & Shirley Rauwerda — Jarvis
Dea & Henry Veldhuis — Ancaster
Agnes & Bert Hanemaayer — Kettleby

Loved by 37 grandchildren and 46 great-grandchildren.

Survived by one brother and two sisters in the Netherlands.

Funeral service was held on March 26, 1996, in the Jarvis Chr. Ref. Church.

Beppe sang until the day she died, she told us not to cry when she was gone, but sing — we will sing in her memory and in thankfulness to our great God, for the song goes on, "Veilig in Jezus' Armen."

Correspondence address: Mr. and Mrs. Henry Veldhuis, 301 Glancaster Rd., Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9.

Look for
Peter and Marja
on page 14...

Obituaries

Aalzum, Fr. Abbotsford, B.C.
March 10, 1906 - March 11, 1996

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph.2:4-5).

After a long and healthy life, the Lord called home our dear father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, on March 11, 1996,just hours after his 90th birthday.

PETER VANDERMEULEN

Predeceased by his wife, Martje Riemersma, on Aug. 11, 1988.

Dear father of Jake & Ann Vandermeulen of Abbotsford, B.C.

Grandfather of:
Jenny & Andy Vander Heide — Abbotsford, B.C.
Margaret & Henry Koopmans — Edmonton, Alta.
Jacqueline & Doug van Rhyn — Ladner, B.C.
Peter VanderMeulen — Abbotsford, B.C.
Arlene & Mike Roersma — Langley, B.C.
Armand & Petra VanderMeulen — Abbotsford, B.C.
Robert & Abby VanderMeulen — Abbotsford, B.C.
and 20 great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held March 14, 1996, at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Abbotsford, with Rev. Bert Slofstra officiating.

Correspondence address: Jake VanderMeulen, 38434 S. Parallel Rd., Abbotsford, BC V3G 2K5

Summer Employment

Responsible college or university student needed on **fruit farm.** Starting June 1 through August. Must have valid driver's license. Please call Groot Fruit Farms at **(905) 643-3203.**

Job Opportunities

Seeking a New Employee

Maple Grove Components and Assembly Ltd. is a new company which currently specializes in plastic injection moulding of small components. We are a 24-hour a day, 5-6 day per week operation with long-term growth potential. We are looking for a conscientious person who is looking to work for a small company, who is willing to learn and contribute to the growth of our company. The employee must be responsible and able to work with minimal supervision. Please send resumes and references to **138 Concession St.E. (Maple Lane), Tillsonburg, ON (Att.: John Bouwers).**

Job Opportunities

Does a Christian workplace interest you?

Durham region family farm seeks **full-time employee** to join team in operating dairy, broiler and cash crop farm. Regular hours, excellent 3-bedr. home provided, near church and school. Successful applicant must be an energetic responsible worker.

Contact Youngfield Farms Ltd.
(905) 986-4853

Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd.
a well-established greenhouse operation, has an immediate opening for a **GROWER** to work in our pot mum and pot rose production. The successful applicant should possess a strong work ethic, be self-motivated and a team player. Position requires basic horticulture knowledge and "hands-on" experience. Mail or fax resume to:

Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd.
1135 Gallagher Rd.
Burlington, ON L7T 2M7
Fax: (905) 632-4022
Attn.: Len VanderLugt

Teachers

BARRIE, ,Ont.: Timothy Chr. School invites applications for an Oct. 1996-June 1997 maternity leave position in the senior grades or possibly a primary grade. Please send letter of application and resume to:

Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma, Principal
Timothy Chr. School
49 Ferris Lane
Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1
Phone: (705) 726-6621.

CHATHAM, Ont.: Chatham Chr. High School an interdenominational school from grades 8 to OAC, invites applications for a **part-time P.E. teacher**, and a **French teacher**, for Sept. 1996. The French position is for one semester only. Please send resume to:

Bruce Mitchell
Chatham Chr. High School
90 Park Avenue East
Chatham, ON N7M 3V4
(519) 352-4591.

ORANGEVILLE, Ont.: Orangeville Chr. School invites applications for **possible teaching positions** at the **primary level** and at the **junior level.** The ability to teach music (instrumental and vocal) would be an asset. Please send a letter of application and resume to:

Mr. George Hoytema, Principal
Orangeville Chr. School
P.O. Box 176
Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z6
Phone: (519) 941-3381

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, situated in the town of Lacombe in central Alberta and serving 350 students in K-9, invites applications for a **Jr. High (7-9) Math/Computer teacher** for the 1996-97 school year. **Possible openings** are also anticipated in the **elementary (1-6) grades.** Please send applications and inquiries to:

John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School
5206-58 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531
Fax: (403) 782-5760

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School invites applications for a **full-time teaching position** in either the **humanities or sciences.** This staff position is required as a result of growth in our grade 10-12 school. Consider joining an excellent staff who have the support and encouragement of a caring society. We all work together to provide a culture of learning and nurture to a great group of 80+ students.

Applicants should be teachers that have the ability to teach from a Christian perspective rooted in the Reformed tradition. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Chr. High School
22 Eagle Rd., Lacombe, AB
T4L 1G7
Phone: (403) 782-4535
Fax: (403) 782-5425

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School invites applications for possible openings involving instruction in **science, French, and P.E.** for the 1996-97 school year. The successful applicants will be qualified in two of these areas. Send resume and statement of educational philosophy to:

Ted Harris, Principal
Beacon Chr. High School
2 O'Malley Dr.
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
Fax: (905) 937-1130.

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Chr. School, a denominationally diverse community which offers Kindergarten through Grade 10, has **potential openings** for a **full- or part-time French teacher,** a **part-time music teacher** and a **full-time opening** at the **primary level.** Please send your resume to:

Ron Donkersloot, Principal
Vancouver Chr. School
3496 Mons Drive
Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6
No applications by fax, please.

Teachers

TERRACE, B.C.: Centennial Chr. School invites applications from committed, Christian educators to fill definite openings for the 96/97 school year in the following areas:

Grade 4 - 10 Art
Grade 4 - 10 French
Grade 4 - 10 Learning Assistance/Resource

These positions could also involve teaching duties in other areas. Additional openings for classroom teachers are anticipated at primary and intermediate levels. Centennial Chr. School presently offers Christian education to approximately 260 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. The addition of Grades 11 and 12 is being planned. Please contact:

Centennial Chr. School
Frank Voogd, Principal
3608 Sparks Street
Terrace, BC V8G 2 V6
Phone: (604) 635-6173
Fax: (604) 635-9385

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.: Cedars Chr. School has **full-time and part-time opening** at the junior/senior high school level in English, Physical Education/Athletics, Chemistry, Biology, Business, Math, French. Applicants must be eligible for membership in the B.C. College of Teachers and should have the ability to teach from a Christian perspective. Please send in resumes, including a Christian Education Philosophy statement to:

Cedars Christian School
701 N. Nechako Rd.
Prince George, BC V2K 1A2
Attention: Hiring Committee
Fax: (604) 564-0729

Vacations

GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION?
Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT and visit family and sight-see at your leisure.
CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN.
year-round accommodations.
FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL
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(905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-0195.

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
$5.95 Canada/**$4.95** U.S.
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Write: The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

Classifieds

Job Opportunities | **Job Opportunities** | **Miscellaneous**

Ordained Person

First Christian Reformed Church, London, Ont., an established downtown church in a university setting has an opening for an ordained person to fill a staff ministry of 2nd pastor. Key to this position is a dynamic preaching of God's Word, exciting worship and the sharing of the gospel in active outreach. The focus of this position is geared to our outreach ministry which we have called *Saturday Night Alive*, a ministry using music and drama to reach those who have wandered from their faith. Pastoral care of the above group (25-39 age bracket) will be a prime responsibility.

Please send inquiries and/or resumes by fax to: **Search Committee, c/o Marlene Regnerus, (519) 455-4364.**

Smithville District Christian High School
6488 Smithville Road, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
(905) 957-3255

As the Lord has blessed us with an increase in enrolment, we are soliciting applications for the teaching positions in the following areas for the **96/97 school year.**

- Physical education and a combination mathematics and/or science and word processing.
- Science with the possibility of a combination of the above courses.
- a 2/3 science position for semester 1 only.
- a possible position in English.

Direct your application and or your inquiries to
Marc Stroobosscher, Principal SDCH.

Worship Director

Burnaby Christian Reformed Church, an evangelical congregation with a reformed tradition, using a blend of contemporary and traditional worship styles, seeks a **half-time worship director** to develop and give leadership to the worship ministry of our church. The successful candidate must be an accomplished musician with good organizational and teaching skills. Please send letters of interest by **May 1, 1996**, to: **Worship Committee, Burnaby CRC, 5825 Nelson Ave., Burnaby, BC V5H 3H6**

ADDRESS CHANGE

Please use this form and allow four weeks for processing request.

Attach your present label here.

please print

Name: _____

New address: _____

City: _____ Prov.: _____ Code: _____

Mail to:
CHRISTIAN COURIER
4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

New address is in effect
_____
(Date)

Co-ordinator of Congregational Life

Surrey Christian Reformed Church is seeking a **co-ordinator (m/f)** for a **full-time contract position** with a two-year term renewable on an annual basis.

Responsibilities include training and developing leaders for our small group, networking and other programs. This includes development and sourcing of materials and programs to support the training.

The position will also be key in establishing processes to tie our ministries to our Statement of Purpose and Goals.

Do you have a passion for motivating and enabling people? Do you have good administrative skills and experience in providing training?

We would like to hear from you. Please contact our Implementation Team, c/o Mike Harskamp.

Applications for this position must be received by **April 15, 1996**. Please contact us to request an information package which describes the position and our church community. Please state expected remuneration when applying.

Co-ordinator of Congregational Life
c/o Surrey Christian Reformed Church
15680-91 Avenue, Surrey, BC, V4N 2X2
Fax: (604) 930-2476

Miscellaneous

Salem Christian Mental Health Association

is planning to develop part of its property adjacent to Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, as a residential Christian community for mature adults 55 years and over.

The new development **"King's Terrace"** will consist of a 5-6 storey apartment residence with 75-85 units available on a Life-Lease basis. These 1-, 2-, or 3-bedroom units are in the $105,000 - $155,000 price range and offer an attractive alternative to rental or condominium living.

Anyone interested in this type of accommodation is invited to call for a complete information package on this exciting development.

Please come to our **"Open House"** on **May 11, 1996**, from **2:00-5:00 p.m.**, at the **Second Christian Reformed Church, 444 Steeles Avenue West, Brampton, Ont.**

For more information or to register for attending the "Open House," please call:
Rev. Albert Dreise, Hamilton, at (905) 528-0353 or
Joel Rieder, M.Arch., Brampton, at (905) 457-1618.

Look for our
Calendar of Events
on page 19....

Attention:

Campgrounds and Resort Areas

With summer 1996 not that far away, we plan to group your advertisements in the **April 19, 1996**, issue.
The advertising deadline is **April 10, 1996.**

Many *Christian Courier* readers will soon be making 1996 vacation plans. Let us have your ad copy and instructions as soon as possible so that our readers will know who and where you are!

Stan de Jong, Manager

Kerkdiensten op cassette in de Nederlandse taal

U kunt zich nu abonneren op deze prekendienst, b.v.:

a) een cassette iedere week;
b) twee cassettes maandelijks;
c) een cassette maandelijks.

Prijs $3,50 per cassette
(plus $1,50 als u de cassette wilt houden)

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Jack & Lenie Brouwer
27 Alpaca Drive
Scarborough, ON M1J 2Z8
of bel: (416) 289-0706

Luister naar het programma
Zingend Geloven

Toronto: CHIN FM 101
Elke Zaterdag 8:00 a.m.

Belleville: CJLX-FM 92.3 FM
Zondag 7:00 p.m.

Kingston: CFRC-FM 101.9 FM
Zondag 12:00 middag

You can find
Teacher ads
on page 16...

Classifieds

For Rent

BERGENTHEIM
TE HUUR VOOR VAKANTIE:

Moderne gemeubileerde woning (modern furnished home) — per week of per maand — in Bergentheim, Overijssel (ongeveer 12 km van Ommen).
Voor volledige informatie bel of schrijf naar:

J. Snijders
651-4 Ave. E.
Brooks, AB T1R 0H4
Phone: (403) 362-4052 or
(403) 362-2653

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
210 Clarke St. N.
Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Miscellaneous

NC

Questions people ask us about Parkinsons

- Is Parkinsons contagious?
- Does Parkinsons lead to Alzheimers?
- Does Parkinsons shorten life expectancy?
- Does Parkinsons run in families?
- Does Parkinsons cause rapid disability?
- Is there a lot of pain with Parkinsons?

Generally the answer to these questions is "No". But you may have other questions. If you would like more information about Parkinsons, or The Parkinson Foundation of Canada and its research, patient services and the network of over 100 family support groups, call:

1 800 565-3000

PARKINSONS
Your Care Will Help Find the Cure

Miscellaneous

REDEEMER FOUNDATION

Together We Can Make A Difference!

The Redeemer Foundation is a registered charity that provides financial assistance to Redeemer College and its students through various programs. You can help lay the cornerstone of financial support by becoming a Foundation member. When the call comes, please respond favourably.

— Cornerstone '96 —
Be A Part Of It!

For more information and a free brochure, call the Redeemer Foundation at 1-800-263-6467 or 1-905-648-2131.

Redeemer College - a Christian University College - 777 Hwy. 53 E., Ancaster, ON, L9K 1J4

Reinders architecture

MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP-EDUCATION AND CARE FACILITIES HAVE MADE US A VALUED BUILDING-PARTNER TO MANY CONGREGATIONS AND CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS. PLEASE CALL TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU!

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REDEEMER COLLEGE

Spend an evening with Redeemer College as its faculty lecture series comes to your community. Three Toronto locations this spring:

Evolution: Christians Need To Understand: In a world that accepts the theory of evolution without question, Christians should understand the truth and use it skilfully - **Dr. Gary Chiang.** *Friday, April 19, 1996, 7:30 pm, at Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Etobicoke.*

The Airport Vineyard: A Biblical Response: How should Christians respond to such a prominent movement with many reports of power encounters and changed lives? If you're interested in this aspect of worship, then you won't want to miss this presentation - **Dr. Gene Haas.** *Friday, April 26, 1996, 7:30 pm, at Willowdale Christian Reformed Church, 70 Hilda Ave., Willowdale.*

A Christian Response To Environmental Concerns: Develop a biblical perspective on environmental issues and a greater awareness of our impact on God's creation - **Dr. Henry Brouwer.** *Friday, May 3, 1996, 7:30 pm, at Grace Christian Reformed Church, 25 Channel Nine Ct., Scarborough.*

All welcome. Cake and coffee following the service. Join us for a great evening of fellowship and learning.

777 Hwy. 53 E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4, (905) 648-2131

Miscellaneous

International Executive Director

Christian Reformed World Missions

Christian Reformed World Missions, an agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, is continuing its search for an **International Executive Director.** This position is responsible for the administration of the agency, including all of its overseas missions.

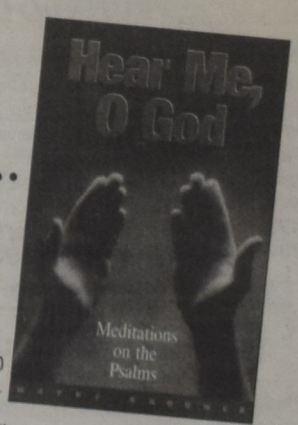
The successful candidate shall be capable of providing visionary leadership and have demonstrated experience and training in missiology, theology, and organizational management. A working knowledge of and membership in the Christian Reformed Church is required. A detailed position description is available upon request.

Nominations are welcome and must be submitted by **June 1, 1996.** Applications are also solicited and must be received no later than **July 15, 1996** (please include a resume and letter stating your interest). Please submit both nominations and applications to:

Rev. Leonard P. Troast, Search Committee Secretary
Calvin Christian Reformed Church
973 West Norton, Muskegon, MI 49441
Telephone: (616) 737-5207

Come Into His Presence...

Meditations on the Psalms



The book of Psalms is filled with human emotion: cries of anguish, whispers of fear and despair, quiet hymns of peace, and shouts of joy. *Hear Me, O God* is a collection of 150 meditations on these moving songs. Writing with warmth and insight, author Wayne Brouwer weaves together stories and his experiences as a Christian Reformed pastor to draw us into a fresh look at the message of each psalm for our own lives. Order a copy of *Hear Me, O God* for yourself and one for someone you love.

#1701-0660CC $12.45US/16.80CDN

Also by Wayne Brouwer:

- **WALKING ON WATER: Faith and Doubt in the Christian Life**
  #1701-0700CC $9.25US/12.50CDN

To order, call:
CRC PUBLICATIONS
1-800-333-8300 US
1-800-263-4252 CAN

Events

Concert of Sacred Music

An evening of sacred music will be presented by a **200-voice choir,** consisting of members of appr. 13 Ontario Reformed churches.

Date and time: **Saturday, April 20, 1996,** at **7:30 p.m.**
Place: **Forward Baptist Church,**
Meyers Rd., Cambridge, Ont.

Freewill offering only. For info. call **Ray Tuinhof at (519) 449-5068**

May 10 - 12

At the King's Table

A weekend conference for persons with a disability and their caregivers. The concert is part of the conference which includes:

Friday Evening
Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic since 1967, will share her experiences of learning to live with a disability.

Saturday Program:
21 workshops have been planned for Saturday. The topics are geared for all officebearers, caregivers and persons with disabilities in the church.
Cost: Saturday only - $40 ($50- includes concert)

Hear Joni in Concert
Saturday, May 11

Concert of Praise

A concert evening featuring
- **Joni and music groups**
- **Colleen & Grace and**
- **DBS & Interregnum.**

Location:
The Athletic Complex
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
Concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday worship:
Rev. Jim VanderLaan will give the message. Jim is the director of the committee on Disability Concerns of the Christian Reformed Church.

For more information about the conference write:
At the King's Table
Eastern Canada
Disability Conference
c/o Nancy Exel Lammers
3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y8

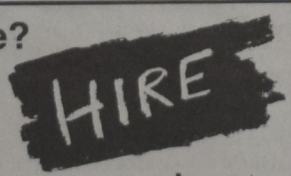
Cost: $125/person - includes accomodations

Concert tickets: Family-$25.00, Single-$8.00, Students (under 16)- $5.00, available at the following locations:

Carpenter's Shop Waterloo 1(519) 885-4500	Carpenter's Shop Stratford 1(519) 271-9102	Family Christian Book Store Burlington Phone 1(905) 637-9151
The Hidden Treasure Cambridge 1(519) 653-0214	The Christian Book Store Hamilton Phone1(905) 387-2377	Mitchell Family Books St. Catharines Phone 1(905) 646-1550

Sponsored by The Eastern Canada Disability Conference of The Christian Reformed Church

What's out there?



(NC)—Once you know what skills you have to market to employers, you can target where you would like to work. There are five main areas in which young people with little or no work experience can often find jobs:

HOSPITALITY: hotel worker, restaurant worker, tour guide
OFFICE: typist, receptionist, clerk
LABOUR: construction worker, warehouse worker, gardener/landscaper
RETAIL: grocery clerk, department store clerk, cashier
RECREATION: camp counsellor, special event worker, pool attendant

Events

Third Annual Conference for Women in the Christian Reformed Church

May 25 and 26, 1996

at **Jubilee Fellowship CRC** in **St. Catharines, Ont.,** with the theme taken from Job 42:

"And he named them
... and gave them their inheritance."
— Celebrating our legacy in Christ —

Keynote speaker: Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen

For more information contact:
Nancy Marsman (905) 682-1785 or Margaret Wunderink (905) 934-5589

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

April 5 Mozart's "Requiem" will be performed at 8 p.m., by the choir and soloists of Central Presb. Church, 165 Charlton Ave. W., **Hamilton**, Ont., together with mostly players of the Hamilton Philharmonic. A Canadian premiere of the unfinished section composed by Duncan Druce. Info./tickets (905) 522-9098.

April 8 Dedication of a mural, based on Psalm 46:4, by celebrated Christian artist Matth Cupido, 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info.: (905) 648-2131.

Apr. 12 The RC Concert Choir and the RC Alumni Choir & Orchestra will perform C.P.E. Bach's cantata "Heilig," and the Easter portion of G.F. Handel's "Messiah." At 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info.: (905) 648-2131.

Apr. 12-14 "Reformed Marriage Encounter" weekend, Holiday Inn, **Red Deer**, Alta. Info./registration: Bill & Robina Dieterman at (403) 963-3663. (#)

April 13 National convention of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, starting 9 a.m., Sheraton Inn Guildford, **Surrey**, B.C. Theme: "The Challenge of Growth." Evening banquet/program starts at 6 p.m. and features a keynote address by Prof. John H. Redekop of Trinity Western University followed by a musical performance. Info./tickets: (604) 583-5575. (#)

April 13 "Hope Amidst Darkness," an ICS-sponsored Community Economic Development Workshop, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. Workshop leader: Murray MacAdam. Also featuring Rev. Allan Reeve. Info./registration: (416) 979-2331.

April 13 Seventh All-Day Conference on Alcoholism, 9 a.m., Faith CRC, **Burlington**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Rich Grevengoed. Sponsored by Family Outreach. Info./tickets: (905) 679-6490. (#)

April 13-27 Spring concerts by the OCMA (Leendert Kooij, director) with Andre Knevel at the organ. **Apr. 13**: King. St. United, **Trenton**, Ont.; **Apr. 20**: Willowdale United, **Willowdale**, Ont.; **Apr. 27**: St. George's Anglican, **Guelph**, Ont. (#)

April 20 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group performs "De Kerkestraat is een keurige straat," a three-act comedy in the Dutch language, 8 p.m., Adam Scott Collegiate Auditorium, **Peterborough**, Ont. Info./tickets: (705) 748-0282 (#)

April 20 "Annual Choir Festival," 7:30 p.m., Forward Baptist Church, 455 Myers Rd., **Cambridge**, Ont. Combined choirs of over 200 voices. Guest organist: Rick Dykstra. Hosted by Bethel RC Choir. (#)

April 20 "Christian Rainbows" special meeting with speaker Dr. John Toews. Subject: "Mental Health and the Church." At 10 a.m., Can. Ref. Church, Dynes Rd., **Burlington**, Ont. Pre-reg. required - $7. Info.: (905) 639-1075 or (519) 631-0307.

April 26 Retirement Rev. John and Gertrude De Jong; potluck supper at Covenant CS, **Smithville**, Ont.: **April 28** Farewell sermon at Smithville CRC at 2:30 p.m. Info./fax (905) 957-2202. (#)

April 27 "Ontario Christian Male Chorus Festival 1996," 7:30 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Don't miss this: eight Ontario male choruses participating! (#)

April 27 "Praise and Worship Concert" with Grace and Colleen (Unity Music Ministries), 7:30 p.m., Clarkson CRC, **Mississauga**, Ont. Freewill offering in support of The Lighthouse ministry. Info.: (416) 535-6262.

April 29 Organist Jonathan Oldengarm in recital, 7:30 p.m., Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont.

May 1 The CRC Ladies' Societies of Bowmanville/Quinte/Ottawa hold a mini-convention, starting 9:30 a.m., in the Days Inn, **Kingston**, Ont. Theme: "Rivers of Joy." Speakers: Rev. Ch. Kooger and Mrs. Margriet VanDee. Info./tickets: Hendrika Donkersteeg at (613) 658-5829. Order before April 13!

May 2 Noon hour organ concert by Jonathan Oldengarm, Metropolitan United Church, **Toronto**, Ont.

May 4 Third Annual Spring Fling Dinner in support of Calgary Chr. School. At Glenmore Inn & Convention Center, **Calgary**, Alta. Info./tickets (403) 242-2896.

News

A shy housewife follows God's call

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed."

These words from Hebrews 12 have deep meaning for Sini Den Otter, chaplain at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton. She recalls the text every time she is tempted to evade a challenge that God is presenting to her. God's Word has given her encouragement and reminded her of the reasons why she must continue to respond to his call in her life.

Den Otter addressed Classis Alberta North of the Christian Reformed Church at its spring session on March 6, when delegates were considering the matter of ordination of women. For Den Otter, the issue is not an academic one, but one which touches her personally. In 1987, when she was taking the final steps to be certified as a chaplain, the classis declared her a deacon-at-large. The endorsement by an ecclesiastical body was necessary before she could pursue her calling.

Out of order

When the Christian Reformed Synod of 1995 gave permission for classes to "declare that the word *male* is inoperative" in the church order, authorizing churches to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister and evangelist, Den Otter applied for a license to exhort.

The fall meeting of Classis Alberta North, however, voted against declaring the world *male* inoperative, and Den Otter's license application was ruled out of order. The issue was revisited at the spring classis, and women engaged in pastoral ministries were encouraged to speak to the delegates.

Den Otter, a fully certified chaplain, is an important part of a team of professionals. The job is not one she would ever have envisioned for herself. At 16 she had quit school and began working as an office clerk in her home town of Rotterdam. A week after she married at age 20, she immigrated with her husband, Job, to Canada. For many years her focus was on being a good homemaker as the couple were blessed with four children.

"I cooked and sewed and gardened and did everything I was supposed to do as a good wife and mother," she says, "but the seeds for this ministry were already there. I believe now that the gift for ministry is inherent in a person, and its formation is influenced by events and people who cross our paths. I had many experiences that have prepared me for this work."

Searching for direction

Den Otter described herself at the time as being shy and hesitant, with little self-esteem or courage. She remembers that when her husband started to take university courses related to his work, she felt jealous. "Job told me I could do that too," she recalls, "but I doubted it very much." However, she did start taking high school courses by correspondence.

COURTESY JESSIE SCHUT

Sini Den Otter, chaplain at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton

As Den Otter's children grew and became more independent, she underwent a depression that required counselling. "The depression was a time of searching for direction and what God wanted me to be and do," she says now. Also during this time, she and her family attended a screening of *The Hiding Place*, featuring the story of Corrie Ten Boom. As she watched Corrie going from bunk to bunk in the film, comforting the other prisoners of the Nazis, she had a deep sense that someday, she, too, would be involved in bedside ministry.

Den Otter decided to take the big step of enroling in university. "My counsellor during the depression had urged me to develop myself and my gifts. I didn't have a specific goal but it was something that interested me."

Den Otter started in 1973, when her oldest daughter was beginning university. It took 10 long years for her to obtain her BA in sociology and religious studies. When she graduated she was 47, and her children were grown and independent. Yet she still felt that her main job was to be the cook and baker, the sewer and homemaker. She took a job as a secretary at her church just to have something to do.

God's call

"The pastor and I were talking about some church visits that needed to be made and suddenly I heard myself saying, 'I'd like to be a chaplain.' I don't think my pastor knew what to say to that. After all, that was impossible in our church," she said.

But the desire for and feeling of God's calling wouldn't leave her. She applied to enrol in a clinical pastoral education course at the university hospital, and to her surprise, she was accepted.

It was the beginning of another long course of study, four years of full- and part-time work, including a stint at St. Stephen's College to get her masters in theology, a requirement for her designation. "When I started these courses I still had doubts, in spite of the fact that my husband kept saying, 'Do it! You can do it!' When I studied at St. Stephen's College, I finally had no more doubts. I was at peace with myself and with the fact that this is what God wanted me to do."

When Den Otter had finished all her course work she had one more hurdle to cross. She needed to have the endorsement of an ecclesiastical body, as well as an official position in a church. Third CRC, of which she was a member, agreed by a congregational vote to request that Classis Alberta North designate Den Otter as a deacon-at-large, with the special task of doing chaplaincy work. In 1987, that request was agreed to in classis meetings. The process continued at the denominational level, where she was officially endorsed as a chaplain by the denominational chaplains committee.

Prepared for the task

For the last eight years, Den Otter has been working at a job she loves, counselling parents whose babies have died, visiting the sick, conducting chapel services, helping dying patients in their final moments.

She feels God has been preparing her for this all of her life. "The bombings of Rotterdam during the war taught me dependence on God. The immigrant experience with its loneliness and homesickness, the blessings of raising a family, the depression, and the experience of having cancer and overcoming it have all been instrumental in preparing me for this job," she says now. "Even my Dutch accent is sometimes a bridge to new immigrants."

Den Otter still struggles, though, with speaking up when her calling is challenged. The vote in classis last fall that ruled her application to exhort out of order was such a challenge.

Den Otter did speak up. She told the delegates her story, and finished by challenging them with these words: "There is an awakening in the church, which I believe is from God, on the part of women to claim their gifts — even for ministry. What will the church's response be? Will the church receive these women with open arms, or is it going to put all kinds of obstacles in the way?"

On March 6, Classis Alberta North voted 27-13 to declare the word *male* in church order Article 3 inoperative, and to permit churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister and evangelist.

News Digest

Answer to prayer?

TORONTO — The *Toronto Star* reports that a deceased Jarvis Street Baptist Church parishioner left an estate of $1.5 million, $50,000 of which went to the Toronto Baptist Church.

There is a store-front downtown church called Toronto Baptist, but the woman never attended that church. Jarvis Street Baptist Church says that the whole thing was a mistake and that she meant her own church, which was not mentioned anywhere else in the will.

But the pastor of Toronto Baptist Church says, "We prayed for this for 10 years. It's exactly what we need." He's not willing to give up what the Lord has given his church in answer to prayer.

If Jarvis Street Baptist Church wants to take the matter to court, it may have to argue that God does not hear prayers.

Would you do this?

ROCK FALLS, Wis. (EP) — An Amish man from Wisconsin rejected an insurance company's $212,000 settlement offer for a traffic accident that killed his wife, expressing concern that such wealth would tempt his family to abandon their values. "It is more harm than good," said Mahlon Lambright, a carpenter. His wife Mary, 38, was killed last year when a semitrailer truck struck their horse-drawn buggy.

Britain keeps ban

LONDON, England (EP) — After conducting a comprehensive review of the question, Britain has decided to retain its ban on homosexuals in the military. Defense Minister Michael Portillo said that lifting the ban would hurt discipline and morale in the nation's armed forces. "People are working in a situation of absolute trust. They are living almost literally on top of each other in very confined situations," he told BBC Television. A survey of military personnel found that most believed dropping the gay ban would hurt their "discipline or their fighting power," said Portillo.